

Media Strategy for VFP Chapters

Keep in mind the **Goal for Media Coverage**: To Increase the exposure and reputation of VFP to the general public in order to *Grow the Chapter*

Have regular public events to which you invite the media. Some examples include: hosting debates about the war or war funding, showing films and documentaries, hosting guest speakers, cultural events such as concerts, art displays, or theater . Many chapters probably already have such events, just don't forget to think about the best ways to get media coverage.

Don't over-wear your welcome. Don't send out press releases for every VFP chapter meeting. But when you are doing a public event, don't miss out on the opportunity to invite the media to cover it.

Know Your Audience. If you are protesting a recruiting station in a certain neighborhood, you are probably better off pitching the local community pennysaver or neighborhood free weekly as opposed to the New York Times. Determine who your target audience is, and then figure out what media that audience is more likely to consume.

Know Your Media. The corporate mass media generally operates under some basic guidelines: newsworthiness, timeliness, and brevity. Corporate mass media do not do a very good job on giving historical or political context to a situation – lengthy explanations, and pages of background in a press release will not be helpful.

Different types of media have different emphases. With television, for example, obviously the emphasis is on visual cues and news hooks. Don't neglect the photographers from newspapers, however.

Determine each media outlet's lead time. Magazine features might have a 6 month lead-time, meaning they need to have the story written 6 months before it actually is published. The nightly news or the daily paper, on the other hand, might have a 12-hour turn-around time.

Know your outlet's style, content, and editorial slant. If you are trying to get coverage of an event from a certain media outlet: the local newspaper, the local news channel, etc. – make sure you read through a few issues of that paper beforehand. Try to identify the reporters or editors who regularly cover veterans' affairs, the anti-war movement, or politics. Get to know their work – link in your story with their past articles when you call them to pitch your event.

Go local. Local media are interested in local actors and subjects of the news. Include quotes from local participants or members of your event or chapter.

Lead with the most important information first. What is the breaking news, the most interesting, compelling, or fascinating point of focus?

DIY. If all else fails, become your own media. Have digital cameras and video on-hand. Create your own you-tube videos – and put these links into the next press release you send out. Go viral, and spread your you tube link on listservs, your local indymedia, and websites.